

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 3539

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF, HA, BF
SUBJECT: HAITIAN EMIGRATION PROBLEM

REF: STATE 206510

1. QUESTION OF ILLEGAL HAITIAN EMIGRATION IS ONE THAT HAS CONCERNED GOH FOR SOME TIME. ALTHOUGH GOH IS AWARE OF AND OBVIOUSLY APPRECIATES PRIVATE TRANSFERS FROM HAITIANS IN U.S. (ESTIMATED AT ABOUT \$45 MILLION LAST YEAR) AND IS CONCERNED ABOUT POPULATION PRESSURES, HAITIAN LAW RIGOROUSLY CONTROLS DEPARTURE FROM HAITI AND GOH HAS ATTEMPTED TO ENFORCE LAW. WE ASSUME GOH HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY INTERESTED IN CONTROL OF OUTFLOW BECAUSE A) OF HAITIAN PRIDE AND DISLIKE OF THINGS HAITIAN BEING EXPOSED TO PUBLIC SCRUTINY, B) IMAGE OF IMPOVERISHED HAITIANS ESCAPING TO THE U.S. IS EMBARRASSING CONTRAST TO REALITIES OF DUVALIER'S "ECONOMIC REVOLUTION", C) CONTROLLING POPULATION OUTFLOW HAS NO POLITICAL COST SO FAR AND, IN ABSENCE OF APPRECIABLE SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAM, RETENTION OF CITIZENRY IMPOSES NO TANGIBLE ECONOMIC BURDEN, D) CONTROLLING OUTFLOW WILL NOT AFFECT CURRENT LEVEL OF PRIVATE TRANSFERS.

2. EVEN THOUGH GOH SINCERELY INTERESTED IN CONTROLLING
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OUTFLOW, ENFORCEMENT HAS LARGELY BEEN LIMITED TO INTERNAL POLICE CONTROL SINCE GOH HAS VIRTUALLY NO COASTAL PATROL CAPABILITY. ENFORCEMENT HAS NOT BEEN OVERLY EFFECTIVE IN VIEW OF VERY LONG COAST LINE, SPARSELY SETTLED REGIONS, POORLY ORGANIZED POLICE EFFORT, AND POSSIBILITIES OF BRIBING LOCAL ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS. IN VIEW OF RECENTLY INCREASING OUT-

FLOW, HOWEVER, GOH HAS STEPPED UP INTENSITY OF POLICE CONTROLS ON THE NORTH COAST AND HAS HAD SOME SUCCESS. GOH, FOR EXAMPLE, SEIZED BOAT OF SOME 29 HAITIANS 23 AUGUST PREPARING TO LEAVE FROM ST. MARC.

3. BECAUSE MOST TRIPS APPEAR TO BE COMMERCIALY ORIENTED (PASSENGERS REPORTEDLY PAY FROM \$50 TO \$500), AND CARRIED OUT BY CAPTAINS WHO HAVE FREQUENTLY MADE THE RUN NORTH, GOH HAS BEGUN TO INTEREST ITSELF IN HOW TRIPS ARE ORGANIZED. GOH ASSUMPTION PRESUMABLY IS THAT RELATIVE COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE VENTURES WOULD PROBABLY INVOLVE OTHERS THAN THE INDIVIDUAL BOAT CAPTAIN. TO PURSUE THIS INQUIRY FURTHER, GOH HAS BEGUN TO INTERVIEW RETURNEES. ALL THOSE RECENTLY RETURNED FROM GUANTANAMO WERE SO INTERVIEWED, AS WERE 5 OR 6 FROM THE 300 HAITIANS RETURNED FROM SANTIAGO DE CUBA. (THE INTERVIEWS ARE BRIEF; NONE INTERVIEWED HAVE BEEN DETAINED MORE THAN FEW HOURS TO OUR KNOWLEDGE.)

4. EVEN IN BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES, GOH CONTROLS WILL BE FAIRLY INEFFECTUAL IN VIEW OF WEAK GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION, COUNTRY'S POVERTY, OVERPOWERING ECONOMIC ATTRACTIONS OF U.S. AND WIDELY HELD BELIEF THAT THOSE WHO SUCCEED IN GETTING TO U.S. MAY STAY AND WORK.

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